

Fabricating the Aesthetics of Mass through the Machine Made Multiple.

By

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BFA (Honours, First Class)

Submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
University of Tasmania

July 2006

Signed Statement of originality

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28 . 6 . 06

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A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Lucia Usmiani', is written on a light blue rectangular background.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are many people who have helped to make this thesis possible. Firstly, I would like to thank my son, Christopher Francis, whose faith and patience over the last three years I have valued more than he realises. Secondly, I'd like to thank my supervisor Paul Zika for his support and guidance throughout the project.

Many thanks also go to Michael Clarke and Bryony Nainby for their excellent editing.

The many others whom I would like to thank offered their support in various capacities as bottle collectors and washers, study buddies and technicians; Mary Scott, Stuart Houghton, Fiona Lee, Sally Rees, Celia Lendis, Rosemary O'Rourke, Meg Keating, Adrian Read, Rowena Wilkinson, Ros Lord, Di Klaosen, Miriam Berkery, Susie Delarue, Joy Frasson, Kate Neasey, Pat Hayes, John Kertesz and Elle Lee.

ABSTRACT

This research investigates the aesthetic of the multiple with an emphasis on material and process. Through a series of artworks both formal and informal displays of repetition are explored, focusing on the three dimensional object in multiple and investigating links to repeat surface pattern.

The project is placed in context with art practices that employ the use of the multiple, exploit the value of banal objects and demonstrate a labour intensive approach in the making process. These artists include Tom Friedman, Donna Marcus, Fiona Hall, Leonardo Drew and Do-Ho Suh. The theoretical investigation into pattern and ornament, installation, order and mass production and modernism includes a reflection on the writings of E.H.Gombrich, Debra Schafer, James Trilling, Claire Bishop, Brigitta Olubas, Z. Kracauer, Ray Batchelor, Susan Stewart and Nicolas Bourriaud.

Strong influencing factors from primary experiences impact on the process. Factory work embedded the effects of repetitive labour and its accumulative outcome on production and the body. A life-long interest in decorative domestic crafts has established direct repetitive processes in the art making. Memories of these experiences are reflected in the final aesthetic.

The art making is approached systematically involving the separation of the different stages of fabrication. Attention is focused on one stage at a time which then develops into a repetitive task. This way of working ensures a degree of uniformity, and produces an accumulation of component parts that motivates the labour by regulating the progress. The activity of the assembly line is replicated in the multiple arrangement of units and the monotonous tasks of the process. Used and discarded objects are transformed through a labour intensive process in an attempt to relocate the hand-made in contemporary art making practice

and question our engagement with single-use products. Each object is reduced to an unfamiliar form and treated as pure material. Although alien in appearance, the material is familiar enough for recognition to play a part in the spectator's engagement with the work.

The artworks and installations in this thesis align the aesthetic outcomes of mass production with the visual codes of pattern and decoration. It situates vernacular making processes in contemporary art practice and exploits the notion of repetition and the multiple through actions and choice of material. This aesthetic is based on simple elements, the use of everyday objects and a sense of playfulness with an aim of delivering the experience of mass.

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